

WASHINGTON — The three member Task Force, Chaired by Representative Charles Gonzalez, D-Texas, met Thursday with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to approve the proposed Engagement Plan for investigating the contest filed in Florida's 13th District between GOP incumbent, Representative Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and challenger, Christine Jennings.

The primary objective outlined in the Engagement Plan proposed by the GAO is to analyze the tests that have already been conducted on the voting systems used in Sarasota County, and determine if additional tests need to be conducted.

While the GAO proposal for its review and analysis of voting equipment and existing studies indicates that they will provide their finalized findings and recommendations to the Task Force in September of 2007, Task Force members approved a motion offered by Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., to set July 27th as a "target" date for the GAO to complete their analysis. However, Nabajyoti Barkakati, a senior technologist with the GAO's Center for Technology and Engineering, indicated that Lofgren's proposed target date would be difficult for the GAO to meet. "We think it could take longer," Barkakati told the Task Force. Members sympathetic to GAO's position noted that July 27th was only a target date, and that the GAO should not sacrifice a thorough investigation for the sake of expediency. "The target is a word selected carefully, because we want to get this done, on the other hand, we want them to do a good job," Lofgren noted.

In addition to the Engagement Plan's objectives and timelines, the Task Force also discussed the need for a transparent investigation process that engaged both Democrat and Republican staff throughout the GAO investigation. In response to Task Force member Rep. Kevin McCarthy's, R-Calif., concerns over transparency, Task Force Chairman, Rep. Charles Gonzalez, D-Texas, noted, "I guarantee you, and I know that I speak for Congresswoman Lofgren and staff, that whatever we receive, you are going to get, and whatever inquiries that are made, you are going to be copied."

The Task Force is expected to receive periodic updates from the GAO, and will decide how and if it will proceed with additional testing once it receives the finalized findings.

Attached is a link to the [Government Accountability Office Engagement Plan for Review of Voting Equipment Used in Florida's 13th Congressional District During the 2006 General Election](#).

For more information, contact the Republican Committee press office at (202) 225-8281.